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Urban colleges and universities are reassessing their purposes and roles in American life in an era when they are increasingly challenged by social change. The modern university finds that it will be necessary to involve itself more actively in social participation. This outlook will require curriculum changes, enhancing the otherwise traditional system of higher education with an academic environment more relevant to and cognizant of the significant societal and community problems. This new focus has been catalyzed in part by discontented students who demand an active and meaningful involvement in the world in which they live. Also a growing demand for manpower, particularly in the public or human service sector, is making itself increasingly felt. To help meet this challenge, the urban college and university should create systems for providing realistic, integrated human service learning and work experiences for their students. A college should educate and prepare students to face the unique problems o" urban societies; conduct research on these problems; channel services to the community through institutional programs and cooperation with other concerned city agencies; provide the capability for multi-disciplinary attacks on identifying, analyzing and solving the complex physical and social problems of the urban community; and provide the type of liberal education all cities will need to prosper. (WM)

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HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE CITY

IN THE SEVENTIES

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE CITY IN THE SEVENTIES

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Hearing Dr. Delker recite my biographical data sounds a little like a reading from Who's Who. With the rash of organ transplants being performed, there's a new edition coming out. It is called "Who's Whose."

These are exciting times in education. Education is now a growth industry. It is as much a part of the contemporary culture as the corporation, and shares headlines with war, crime and baseball. It has become exciting, both to the people who work in it, and hopefully the students who are subjected to it. There are ferment and innovation, psychological alarm at costs along with greater financial support, critiques and defenses about everything from computer assisted instruction of pre-schoolers to the effect of racial isolation on student achievement to the balance of teaching versus research at the graduate level. Even the church state issue is debated. In the Office of Superintendent of Schools of Shakopee, Minnesota, a notice hangs on the wall which reads: "In case of air raid, prayers are allowed in this school." Most exciting of today's dialogues, however, concerns the role of education in the changing processes of society.

Today, the nation's cohesiveness is endangered by a host of conditions which in the past we have been either too blind or too unwilling to view in terms of their ultimate consequences.

Presented at the National Seminar on the University in Urban Community Service. University of Maryland, College Park, October 2, 1968

By cohesiveness I do not mean singleness of view about major issues confronting the nation, nor even singleness of purpose. What I do mean is singleness of belief in the basic principle of a democratic government: that all problems are possible of rational solution, in which solution is not always derivative from facts or objective research, but very often from compromise and good will.

In the midst of the clamor, the riots, the rapid change in values and morality, universities have rarely acted to change, or in a sense even reacted, except in those instances when their internal authority was questioned.

Early debaters were sharply divided in their views of the role of the educational system as a participant in social change. The "four-walls" concept presented the school as an isolate, detached from the outside world by a curriculum curtain that was the fabrication of and the province of the educationist. On the other hand, faced with society's festering sores, recently exposed to an angry nation and world, another group took to question whether or not the schools should be part of the community in a practical-working, as opposed to a theoretical-academic sense.

Colleges in an Ecological System

How do schools fit into their communities as social and cultural systems? Shouldn't a school or college see itself as part of a larger ecological system in which it fosters everything from social welfare to urban rehabilitation? If so, James Perkins, President of Cornell, charges

that "We have not been very inventive about how to relate studies and experience or thought and action, and the result can be frustration, or apathy, or even revulsion on the part of good students." Relate that statement to Berkeley, Howard, Wisconsin, Columbia and, to a less visible degree, hundreds of other campuses.

Colleges and universities are at last taking a long, new look at their purposes and at the roles of their faculty, administrators and students. And they are asking whether or not they can achieve in the university a sense of community, in which the process of learning is not limited to the academic experience but rather is part of the total living, working and playing experience of the college, the community, the Nation, the world.

I do not believe it necessary to reiterate the old battle cries about whether or not, for the sake of academic excellence, the world of theory should be separated from the world of action. Nor need we engage in probabilistic debate about the proportion of a college's or university's energies or resources that should be devoted to teaching versus research versus community "service." These are interesting problems to pursue though it is doubtful that they will be resolved to the satisfaction of any, because they derive from forces not always controllable or some times even understood. Surely the question of whether alumni determined academic matters because of their support of sports was argued hotly, for example, but the influence of these groups has waned, not so much because of a conscious decision on the

part of university administration, but because other kinds of demands as for example, research, assumed greater importance.

That the university has in its history, in one way or another turned its attention to the problems of the times, certainly cannot be attacked; witness university involvement in the agricultural extension service or research in a wide spectrum of activities associated with national and international needs. But as Chancellor Klotsche of the University of Wisconsin charges, "if 'community,' once predominantly rural, has changed in location, ethnic composition, economic activity and needs for services, a university must accommodate accordingly if it wishes to remain a relevant and progressive force."

A new identity is, in fact, beginning to be assumed by the colleges, an emerging public role of the university in American life. The complex demands of a specializing society, in which new knowledge is a critical factor of growth, have found the university sought after more than ever before to help in research, training and consultation on problems of economic and social development both at home and abroad. The modern university is beginning to involve itself in the function of social participation along with its historic mission of observer and critic of public affairs. Forms of social participation are now being assessed by universities throughout the Nation. Whatever the outcome of this assessment, it is reasonable to expect that the future mission of the public universities, if not the private universities, will include much more emphasis upon the broad concept of public service as a base for educating students and, indeed, for research.

One might also anticipate that this change in the outlook and mission of the universities will affect the academic curriculum to the extent that, more and more, the academic classroom will not be bound by space but will be projected throughout the world via television, actual study groups or working parties moving to the "action," wherever it may be found.

Students and Social Change

So much for the university as an evolving institution in terms of its interface with the world around it.

College students today are searching for real world educative experiences which will test theory in practice and will permit inductive development of new theoretical formulations in their chosen fields of study. Dissatisfied with the world as handed to them by their parents, they seek innovative, dynamic solutions to society's significant problems based on new sets of premises. But their opportunities are limited. Institutions of higher learning in the midst of the urban ghetto, walled in by the bricks of an "intellectual curtain" have only now begun to turn their eyes to the decay and ignorance around them. Inside, the rising voice of discontent about meaninglessness of role and irrelevance of curriculum, a cry to the world outside, are still mightily contained by a rigid proscription of traditional purposes of an educational "community."

Father Ted Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame University, says, "There is something a little sick about the present system of higher education. Looking at its total spectrum, all the way from lower education through the Ph.D. and post-doctoral, I think it might best be described in the favorite

adjective of modern students -- 'unreal'... We put people in this thing almost as participants in an oriental dance, where they go through all these motions and yet learn very little about themselves or the world they live in, or about other people."

Universities point with ardor to their responsibility for service to society, but we see little priority to it. They point to a small foray into tutorial work as what service is supposed to be.

Jacqueline Grennan, President of Webster College, adds that "Learning is not essentially expository, but exploratory. It happens out in the world of action, a new ecumenical world of search. This search has led many young people into protest and many more into such public service as the Peace Corps, VISTA, American Friends Service Committee and Papal Volunteers."

Harold Taylor, former President of Sarah Lawrence College, challenges that "In the past, the student has been considered an unavoidable element in the educational process, more to be coped with than to be treated as a responsible young adult. We have fallen short of making the call for service into a philosophy of education for a democratic society."

The need is present for a massive expansion of opportunity for college students to express this sense of commitment, to be participants in and architects of the experientally hastened social change here and abroad.

Human-public Service Manpower Needs

At the same time that universities are pondering their meaning in a new and changing social order and students are searching for their place in that order, a great manpower demand, particularly in the public service, or more broadly human service, sector of our society is about to submerge us. A study by Herman Neibuhr, Assistant to the President of Temple University for Urban Affairs (note his title), on this program, projects a shortage of four million such workers by 1972, just to meet demands already on the books, in fields like health, education, welfare, justice, city planning, urban administration, housing, transportation and the like. Employment in the public sector is expected to expand still more as society makes more demands for services. The need is therefore evident for ways to bring into human service fields more trained manpower.

If the college and universities would create systems for providing integrated human service learning and work experiences for students, it is likely that many of those students, testing themselves against the pragmatic reality of such work, would opt for careers in these fields. This statement is supported by evidence from Peace Corps research which shows that college graduates from both liberal arts and technical professional persuasions more frequently switch their career choices after Peace Corps service to human service fields than vice versa.

My assessment is not made in the spirit of criticism but in the spirit of challenge. I believe the significance of higher education in our country will diminish as it sits in the bleachers watching the action on the ball

field below. If colleges and universities do not stand up to the challenge -- and I believe the opportunity -- their influence will be no greater than that accorded the aging, crotchety former town politician who now sits on the park bench discussing yesterday's wars and solving today's problems with anachronistic solutions. It is in the hope that higher education can, and indeed will act, therefore, that my comments are directed.

The difficulties, however, are compounded from (1) the problems of orienting the total direction of an institution of higher learning, restricted by precedents, provincial faculty interests, departmental rivalries and financial problems it is trying to solve; and (2) the complexity of the urban problem which has so far defied definition, let alone solution. This view is supported in the "Report on Experimental Programs Assisted by the Ford Foundation," which concludes that to have impact on the university as a whole, requires an across the board commitment. You may be coming to the conclusion that I am a pessimist. I really am not, for a pessimist is a fellow who <u>really</u> knows what's going on.

An institution for higher education in the city must establish its foundations on a definition of purpose, clearly enunciated and supported, upon which will rest its structure (looser departmental barriers); faculty (selection based on interest and commitment to the mission); students (with a perceptible service and action orientation); curriculum and research (planned with students, local community, and urban "experts" for utmost

relevance); a service component (in which it will be possible to study and work outside the "four walls," providing service while building theory out of action); and indeed its very location.

The purposes of such a college or university should be clear at the outset. Briefly stated, they may be to (1) educate students for understanding the unique characteristics, problems and challenges of urban societies and preparation of professionals who wish to devote their careers to working on those problems; (2) conduct research on real problems of urban society, in the city and on the campus with those struggling for better understanding, prediction and control of factors associated with quality of life in urban settings; (3) channel service to the community by applying personal commitment and energy and knowledge to delivery of services requisite to solution of urban problems in concert with those other agencies and institutions whose responsibility it is; (4) provide the capability for a truly multi-disciplinary attack on identifying, analyzing and solving the complex physical and social problems of the urban community; and (5) provide the general civilizing quality of a liberal education all citizens will need to live happily and productively in an increasingly urban world.

The university will provide a research base of excellence, a calibre of teaching distinction in which learner-centered teaching offers rewards equivalent to research; strong interaction between teaching and research faculty and between the students of both as well as between the faculty and students of each. In this institution, it will be a fact that the college

or university exists for the benefit of the community and the student, and that these are not simply factors to be coped with. Ideas of all kinds will be welcome but especially those that relate to the major urban mission of the institution.

New, multi-disciplinary curricula and specialized organizational arrangements would be developed, that would emphasize systems approaches to solution of problems which are complex and themselves multi-disciplinary in content.

Relevance as well as breadth would become the basis for courses, seminars, individual study and work experience; certain core subjects might include planning, ecology, social accounting, law, behavioral sciences, economics, public health, education, and government and politics.

A liberal portion of the course work would be accomplished off-campus, as planned for example, in the State University of New York's newest venture at Old Westbury in Long Island, New York by its first president, Harris Wofford. Urban extension activity could well begin in the freshman year, under carefully supervised conditions, expanded in breadth and depth as students move toward their senior year and graduate work. Much of this work would be accomplished by a liaison relationship with local, state, Federal, or private institutions concerned with the broad range of growing human service requirements.

The work itself would also be a laboratory for conducting essential research or data collection and for testing out new ideas of merit. Students would, in addition to performing services, feed in ideas for research, and

collect and analyze data as part of their own research training. You can see, therefore, that I do not prescribe that the university abandon its role as a sanctuary for the philosopher, theoretician or intellectual. Part of the university must be an ivory tower to provide the balance against the distortion that comes from looking at all problems from the "worm's-eye" view.

In moving in this direction, an institution will require intimate involvement of all relevant community agencies and segments of the population in the planning: the city departments, community action agencies, service organizations, school boards, business and industry, the poor, ethnic groups, religious groups, other educational institutions at the technical, community college or higher levels, merely to begin a list. All of these will be important as sources of financial and moral support; work opportunity for students; channels to the problems; cooperators in research; implementers of research findings; and allies in political difficulties that are bound to arise.

This college and university should also be a resource for persons who wish to serve in allied fields short of a full professional degree, either by providing the training in extension programs or by assisting community colleges to establish programs articulated with theirs so that options to continue toward a bachelor or higher degree remain open and flexible. Thus the tremendous pressures for aides, assistants and sub-professionals to support the shortage professions may be eased. But the University must be willing to move in this direction, not simply cling to old ways. One is reminded of the 90 year old woman who refused to take her first ride in an airplane. "No, siree" she said, "I am going to stay

at home right here on earth and watch television just the way the good Lord intended I should."

These are bare outlines of what could be a major instrument in developing an infrastructure for the war on poverty, disease, crime, delinquency, illiteracy, ignorance, discrimination, ugliness, substandard housing, and all forms of deprivation.

Charles Haar, Assistant Secretary of HUD, has put it eloquently.

> "There have been three great tests of the responsiveness, capacity, and flexibility of American colleges. The first great test was to equip the nation with the tools and knowledge basic to the development of American agriculture after the Civil War. The second challenge was that of introducing science, mathematics and modern languages into a classics-oriented curriculum. Today, the needs of the cities pose a third great challenge. As on the previous occasions, this is a problem which dominates its time."

He goes on to day that

> "the concern of the academic community nevertheless too often seems characterized by an overindulgence in pronunciamentos and manifestos, combined, strangely, with an inordinate aloofness that bars the full participation required to translate ideas into action.
>
> "Involvement and commitment; a respect for the pragmatic; a willingness to engage in and with community issues -- few urban universities would rate high marks in such tests. By contrast, consider the contribution of the land grant colleges to the

development of American agriculture. From fertilizers to fox-farming to family nutrition, they led and pushed and persuaded that most obdurate of objects, the American farmer, to an unequalled productivity... And no one worried much about the occasional Mud and Manure that accompanied the process.

"Is the urban university," he pleads, "as concerned, as Competent, as creative and as conscionable in its pursuit of urbanity and understanding, acumen and aspiration?"

Samuel Brownell has written well of the glow that lights the way. "Cities," he says, "are made up of people and cities should be places where it is good for them to live, to bring up children, to carry on all kinds of occupations, to enjoy their leisure time, to develop their talents through education, to worship, to find friendship, to meet with friends and neighbors socially, to contribute to their welfare, to grow old rewardingly, and to have the attention to physical ills when needed. The problems of urban dwellers when some of these conditions are absent or inadequate are the problems of the city."

The urban college and university must confront the urban reality in all its infinite complexity. This will take more than operations research, more than depth interviews among rebels and rioters, more than cadres of economists and political scientists analyzing the intertwined transactions of dollars and political power, more than specialists in rescue operations for the sick, the jobless, the retarded, the emotionally crippled. It will require new kinds of committed scholars--practitioners who include among their ranks specialists who see the parts in relation to the whole

and generalists who have a commanding view of the intersections of complex events. The new urban college and university also will require philosophers and poets to plumb the wellsprings of human conduct.

Without guiding principles, the world of events is unreadable chaos; but without experience the world of words is barren, empty and only half alive. The university needs to cultivate insight and compassion as well as knowledge. This is why the city, in all its beautiful and terrifying and rewarding complexity, must be the laboratory of the university.

As the program of operations under Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 matures, there is growing evidence of its tremendous potential for Community Service and Continuing Education in applying the competence concentrated among American colleges and universities on an attack on the array of crucial community problems; including housing, poverty, government, recreation, employment, youth opportunities, transportation, health, land use, community development, human resources development, human relations, and economic development.

This is a fine beginning, and it may just be the first tug of the engine that gathers up the energy to increase the momentum of the entire higher education establishment. Hopefully, substantial change will take place in the scale of federal commitment to urban problems.

The Federal Government must make the same commitment to urban matters it gives to science. Note this comparision:

> "This year the National Institutes of Health expect to spend $804 million for research fellowships, traineeships, and other educational programs."
>
> "In contrast, the federal program developed to assist colleges and universities to increase the number of professional urban

planners and specialists... in 1967 and 1968 received appropriations of $500,000. This provides only 80 fellowships each year in urban planning for the entire country."

A protester at a recent meeting told me that mine was the best speech he ever walked out on. So let me conclude before I find myself in the same situation again. If colleges and universities do not take up the cudgel, new institutions will come in to fill the vacuum. Perhaps this may be for the best, some will say. But I am afraid that it is not, for the very tradition of the university, its questioning spirit, its objectivity and rationality, its meld of the past and the future, and its very continuity are the prerequisites of a rational attack on the problems of today. To serve as a catalyst in today's pressing milieu for bringing together caring, restless, active students and faculty for a major battle on the social ills of American society, can offer no greater challenge, no more worthwhile venture. Your next 3 days promise to open up for debate and maybe even for surgery the dialogue on whether or not higher education will open its intellectual bank and invest in the challenging urban problems before it. I look forward eagerly to your conclusions and recommendations, all the more so since I will soon be helping Columbia University, that bastion of Morningside Heights, bend its posture in the same direction. As Pogo has said recently, "We are faced with insurmountable opportunities." Will our colleges and universities allow themselves to meet that challenge?